LAYS FROM LANCASHIRE

WORDS BY NELSON JACKSON

DECORATIONS BY ARTHUR MORELAND

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE RT. HON. TOM SHAW P.C. M.P.

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LAYS FROM LANCASHIRE

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TO THE READER

THE Cotton Industry needs the services of a class of men known technically as " Tacklers." They attend to the intricate tackle on the cotton looms. As a class—and rightly or wrongly—they are credited with great simplicity. Everything Patsyish in Lancashire is attributed to the Tacklers. But the Tacklers are all good sportsmen and can take a joke with anyone. In fact, most of the Tackler Tales I know were imparted to me by my good friends the Tacklers themselves.

N. J.

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INTRODUCTION BY THE RT. HON. TOM SHAW, P.C., M.P.

I AM writing this introduction not only because Nelson Jackson and Arthur Moreland are friends and brothers, but also because of the subject they deal with. Tacklers' stories are a Lancashire institution. Jackson's definition of tacklers as men " who attend to the intricate tackle on the cotton looms " is priceless. It is like saying that a golfer is a man with a little white ball !

The reading of the jokes brought to me a kind of home-sickness. I could hear the sudden roar of the machinery as the weaving-shed door opened, and feel the blast of warm air and the peculiar " weaving-shed smell " which is quite different from any other smell on earth. I could see the men and women at the looms, the most skilful and independent of their class in the world. I remembered the hundreds of good stories I have heard in the shed, for every day brings a new one in all the thousands of weaving-sheds in Lancashire. Unfortunately most of them deal with the machinery and cannot be told to the uninitiated.

At the moment of writing, Lancashire good

temper and jollity are under a cloud. I hope the sun will break through again and that an improvement in trade and wages will lift carking care from the hearts of Lancashire weavers and tacklers. They are as merry, as generous, as self-respecting, and as genuine a people as I have ever met or ever hope to meet in this world. As to the tackler, he is a very highly-skilled workman indeed—though you will never get a weaver to admit that there are many good tacklers—and his trade union " motto " is this: " A man, in proportion to his intelligence, makes skill take the place of muscle, and with less labour gives a better produce." Those who have done manual work will know what a wealth of meaning is contained in the motto. If Nelson Jackson wants any more stories, I can tell him some. Arthur Moreland has been so long away from Lancashire that he has never seen the smart young man with the public-school appearance who is now the Lancashire tackler. His drawings of the old time tackler are uncannily true to life. To both Jackson and Moreland I say: good luck to your book and may Lancashire flourish !

T. SHAW

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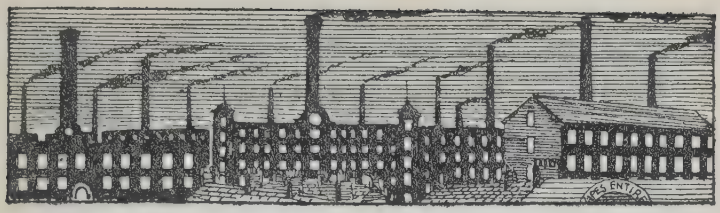


1. THE FIGHT

In Lancashire where Cotton Mills impinge upon the vision—
Whose Towns are named in Music Halls in jocular derision—
There dwells a race, or sept, or clan of simple-minded cacklers—
Who 'tend the tackle on the Cotton Looms. They're known as " tacklers."

* * *

One meets with simple guilefulness in Clare and Connemara,
Or in the Antrim Glens, or by the Sacred Halls of Tara ;
There are simpletons in Galway, in Athlone, and in Rostrevor—
But for simpleness the Tacklers have them quite outclassed forever.

The Boxing Boom to Lancashire came like an epidemic.
The Tacklers talked of it in pubs while swallowing their " chemic."*
And Tackleton—a Tackler, too—got " fancying his chances "
As a Middle Weight—and here I will relate the circumstances.

* * *

They found a lad to meet him called the " Little Chorley Wonder,"
Who'd won six winning fights, and hadn't made a single blunder.
A match was made, and odds were laid—at ten to one they started,
And the " Bookies " did a roaring trade for everybody " parted."

* * *

'Twas " odds on " for the " Wonder," and for Tackleton they offered
Fancy prices. No one took them, although very freely proffered.
So Tackleton's supporters deprecating all estrangement—
Sought the other side to see if " they could come to some ' arrangement.' "

---

* Lancashire term for beer.

SPARKLING ALES!

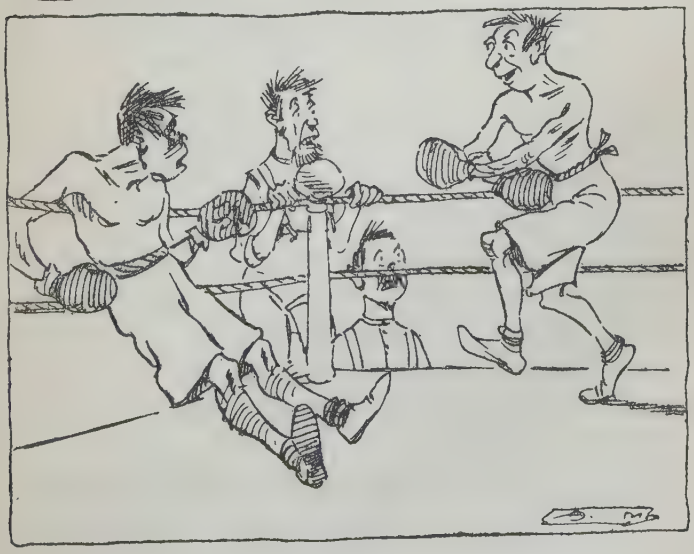
They said " this lad of ours 'as got no earthly chance
o' winnin'—
So we suggest that us an' yo' might do a bit o'
skinnin'.
We'll tek all th'odds that's offered, an' yo' fix it oop
wi' t' " Wonder "
To be knocked out in t'fifth round, see, an' then we'll
share oop t'plunder."

* * *

And thus it was arranged. The match came off as
they had " fixed " it.
Round One was Tackleton's all through—they never
even " mixed it."
The " little Chorley Wonder " took whatever he was
handed—
And when he wasn't " taking counts "—upon the
ropes was landed.

* * *

Round Two began, and Tackleton led right off with a
snifter—
A stinger with a kick in it—a regular ear shifter.
It shook the " Little Wonder," and although he
hadn't oughter—
He forgot about " arrangements," and he went " all
out " for slaughter.



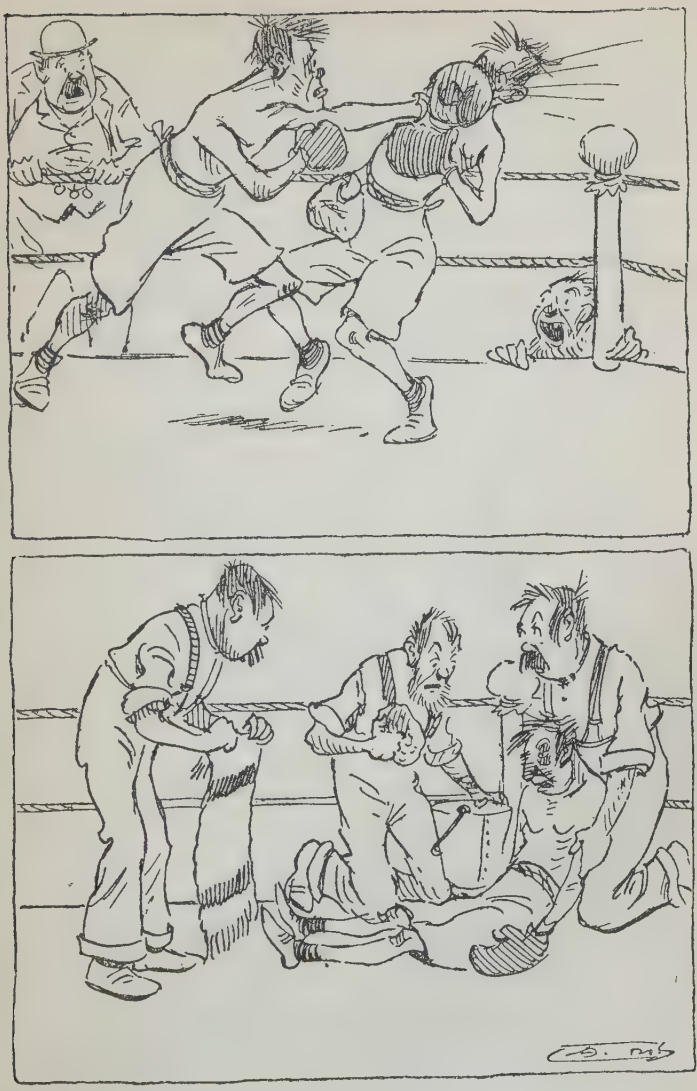
On Tackleton he started like a cooper with a hammer.
He was just about as gentle as a pavier with a rammer,
Or an Army Mule that somebody has tickled with a thistle ;
He was a most explosive bunch of sinew, bone and gristle.

* * *

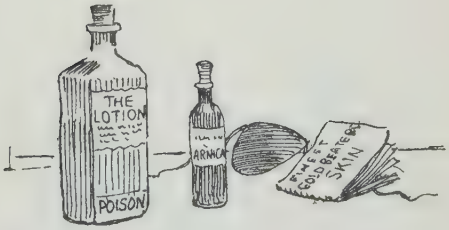
To Tackleton's left ear he paid particular attention,
And a ringside pal of Tackleton's remarked with apprehension—
" Tha wants to stop 'em Tackleton, this isn't time fer kissin',"
And Tackleton replied " there's plurry few on 'em Ah'm missin.' "

* * *

The " Little Chorley Wonder " then a right and left " hook " landed,
And a pair of lovely sable eyes to Tackleton he handed.
He " downed " him for a " count of six," and finished with a dollop
On the mouth and nose of Tackleton—a satisfying wallop.



They took him to his corner—victim of a hocus pocus—
And as his second tried to get his face back into focus—
These fervent words he uttered (sadly sensing what the change meant),
" 'Ere, wot the 'ell's the caper—*'as there bin some fresh 'arrangement'?*"



2. THE NET

In bright and breezy Burnley where they manufacture
cotton goods,
They've football teams galore, and some of them are
simply rotten goods.
There's one team called "The Weavers," which is
nothing to write home about—
Another team's "The Tacklers," which the
"Weavers" team describe as "nowt."

* * *

My Tackler friend named Tackleton was "goalie"
to the "Tacklers" team—
Though why he was I cannot tell—he's far too narrow
in the beam;
But so it was as I relate—the incident is gone and
past—
He made but one appearance—which appearance was
his first and last.

They played a match one muggy day—it's always
muggy Burnley way.
I've often been to Burnley, but I've never seen a sunny
day.

In making this rash statement I would like to bet
'twixt me and you—
I'll get some very terse remarks delivered in a post
or two.

Well anyhow the match was played. The " Weavers " simply rollicked home.
Their scoring was monotonous—the leather simply frolicked home.
When half-time came the " Weavers " had a very useful seven up—
Which in the second half might possibly become eleven up.

* * *

The " Tacklers " hadn't scored a thing, and every Burnley larrikin
Gave full vent to his feelings in a burst of Burnley barrackin'.
They let the " Tacklers " have it, and they made remarks appropriate—
And Burnley crowds' remarks will raise a blister on a boiler plate.

* * *

The coach who trained the " Tacklers " team then let off all his batteries.
He spoke to them straight from the heart—he didn't stoop to flatteries.
He said—" well, tha'rt a bonny bunch Ah doan't think, ay, yo' are an' all.
Shove a'penny's wot yo' owt to play. Who told yo' yo' could play football ? "

On Tackleton he turned in wrath—the bush he didn't beat about—

" Wot doesta think tha's for ? " he said, " Tha gert big gormless lump o' nowt.

Tha's letten seven goals go by—to stop 'em that's wot tha was meant.

Tha meight as well 'a bin at whoam—tha's nyther use ner ornyment."

Then Tackleton, stung to the quick—he deemed the taunt a galling one—
Made answer—and one must admit, it was a most appalling one.
He simply said—and Tackleton, I may say, is no orator—
"*Wot? 'ave Ah got to stop 'em? Eigh, Ah thowt that's wot the net wor for.*"

3. THE ELK

(If the poet Cowper had told it)

By courtesy of Messrs. Reynolds & Co., Berners St., W.

A splendid circus show
To Chorley Town there came.
If Chorley says " Not so,"
Let Preston bear the blame.

* * *

George Sanger was the name
Of him who owned the show—
A showman of great fame ;
A show with lots of " go."

* * *

A man of Lanca-sheer—
He somehow did contrive
To take his " childer " theer—
He'd eighteen—all alive.

His wife, himself, and they
  Count twenty, do they not?
One bob a nob to pay:
  One quid for all the lot.

* * *

The show they went around,
  And chewed the luscious whelk:
A side-show then they found—
  Labelled "The Last Great Elk."

* * *

Of course that wasn't true;
  The Great Elk's day's been o'er—
I know as well as you
  A thousand years or more.

* * *

They charged to see this brute
  One shilling, that they did.
To take in all the shoot
  Would cost another quid.

* * *

It simply wouldn't run
  To this increased expense:
In short, could not be done—
  The cost was too immense.

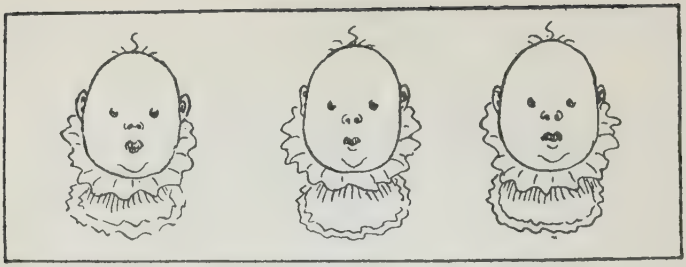
The father of this crew
Had sadness in his face;
He thought he'd like to view
The last of any race.

Just as he turned to go
(His pockets held no tin),
The owner of the show
Said "Aren't you coming in?"

He said " Ah'd like to, fine ;
But look at what Ah've got—
All this 'ere brood is mine—
There's eighteen i' the lot."

* * *

The showman leered a leer,
He said " Stop right there, do.
I'll bring the Elk out here
And let the Elk see you."



4. THE CUP

Josh Tackleton's a Burnley man—
  A Tackler, he, by occupation.
He also is a football " fan,"
  As such—a credit to the Nation.
He knows who's captured every " coop "—
  Which gives his conversation graces ;
He likewise knows the " runners oop,"
  With names, and dates, and times, and places.

* * *

He came down to his work one day
  In quite a state of fume and flutter—
His countenance was far from gay—
  His brow was sad, his gloom was utter.
He to the office stalked across
  As if of all the woes he'd got 'em ;
Demanded there to see the Boss—
  Whose name was Ezra Shufflebottom.

They led him to the sanctum, then
They left him there with his employer—
One of those forceful Burnley men ;
Of sentiment a rude destroyer.
" Well, Tackleton, what's wrong wi' thee ? "
The Boss remarked—" Ah see tha's frettin'."
Said Josh " there's plenty wrong wi' me—
Eigh, deary me, but it's upsettin'."

* * *

" Ma wife's presented me to-day
Wi' triplets, asta 'eard owt like it ?
If any bad luck's on it's way
It's ten to one Ah's bahnd to strike it."
The Boss, delighted, slapped his knee,
And bellowed crude felicitations.
Said Josh, " well, it's no joke wi' me—
Ah doan't want no con-grat-u-lations.

* * *

" Ah'm fixed wi' three more mouths to feed,
Wi' prices goin' oop like rockets.
It seems to me more brass Ah'll need
Than wot Ah've gettin i' mi pockets.
Ah came to get a rise i' screw,
Tha's bahnd to give it to me artna ?
The Boss said " nay, that winna do—
Ah'll tell thee when ah've axed mi partner."

He called Josh later in the day
And said " mi partner an' me's willin'
Consid'rin' all to raise thi pay
An' gie thee an increased ten shillin'.

But tha mun kape it dark, tha knoas—
Tha munna breathe it to the others—
'Cos if to blab it out tha goas
They'll all want to be tret like brothers."

Said Josh, with feeling, " Ah'll say nowt—
Ah'm noan the chap to go an' shout it.
Ah'm kapin' mun tha needna doubt—
They'd ' touch ' *me* if Ah talked about it."

The Boss said " get this i' thi lug ;
As this seems time for jubilation—
We've bowt thee this 'ere silver mug
To mark our sense of approbation."

Said Tackleton, " This bucks me oop !
Eigh, deary me, this is a caper.
Ah never thowt Ah'd win a coop
For addin' to the census paper.
Ah'm gettin' on i' bahnds an' leaps ;
But tell me this an' stop thi funnin',
Do Ah 'old this 'ere coop fer keeps,
Or must Ah win it three year runnin' ? "

5. THE ONION

Tackleton from Burnley once came up to spend the day
In Manchester, that sunny city ever bright and gay. (Ha ha !)
His pal Seth Higginbottom came along with him as well—
To join him in the revel, and what happened I will tell.

* * *

They stood outside a large hotel—immense, enormous, vast—
A monument of ugliness—the first word and the last.
I've stayed in it ; I know it ;—very hard you'd have to try
To find the equal of this loathsome caravanserai.

We'll call it—to disguise it—the " Hotel Splendide "
—though it's not.
If I gave to it it's proper name, my word, I'd get it
hot ;

But Tackleton and Seth beheld the place in awe and
fear,
Till Tackleton bucked up and said, " Ah think Ah'll
pop in 'ere."

" Ah'm goin' to 'ave a pint o' beer, a bit o' cheese an' bread,
Wi' a nunnion to go wi' it, doesta see, my lad ? " he said.
And Seth replied, " but this is t'otel Splendid can't tha see ? "
Said Tackleton, " Ah can't 'elp that, Ah'll mek it do fer me."

* * *

" Aw reet," said Seth, " Ah'll wait fer thee "—then Tackleton sailed in.
" What can I get for you, sir ? " said a waiter, with a grin—
" Some bread and cheese," said Tackleton, " likewise a pint o' beer,
An' doan't ferget a nunnion to go wi' it, doesta 'ear ? "

* * *

" This is the Hotel Splendid," said the waiter haughtily.
" Ah knoas it is," said Tackleton, " now buzz off, doesta see—
Bread an' cheese, a pint o' beer, an' see tha brings it nice—
An' doan't ferget a nunnion 'cos Ah winna tell thee twice."

The haughty waiter soon returned and brought this box of tricks.

Said Tackleton, " 'ow much ? " the waiter answered " six and six "—

And Tackleton, though staggered, paid the bill without a blink,

Then finished up his bread and cheese, his onion and his drink.

He went outside and met his pal, and to his pal he said,
" It's champion is t' beer i' there, an' so is cheese an' bread,
An' th' onion were gradely, too—thee do the same as me ; "
Seth answered, " Ay, but sithee lad—no onion for me.'

* * *

" Why wain't tha 'ave a nunnion ? " " Oh," said Seth, " fer t' breath it's bad."
" Bad fer t' breath," said Tackleton, " Eigh, doan't be silly lad.
Thee 'ave a nunnion wi' thi beer—do as Ah tell thee Seth—
' Cos when tha gets thi crimson bill tha'll 'ave no crimson breath."

6. SIX FLATS

THE folk who live in Lancashire are (many of 'em) musical.
Lots of 'em can sing a bit, and lots of 'em can play
On shawms, lutes, dulcimers, and psalteries, and sackbuts ;
They do it in a casual, but earnest sort of way.
Baritones and basses you can find at three a penny there,
And reedy little tenors you'll discover quite a many there,
Sopranos, and contraltos — well, I mustn't be invidious—
But when they get together they can make an evening hideous.
On large and loud brass instruments they love to raise a hurricane.
A " tidy bit o' brastin' " that is how it is described.
Their enthusiasm's wonderful—in fact it's devastating,

Especially when plenteously of beer they have imbibed.
Two of them I knew who used to blast upon the trombone—
A soap-works band in Warrington once claimed them for its pets.
The music which that band discoursed was never very intricate—
Well known and hackneyed marches were its principal assets.
These twain once got a splendid chance one night to go and deputise,
The offer I may tell you came upon them as a great surprise—
It was to go to Bolton which its intimates call "Bowton"—
I've often been to "Bowton" and I've left without regrets.
For Opera the offer was, Carl Rosa's crowd were playing it—
A sweet and simple little thing—"Tannhauser" is its name.
Two trombones of the orchestra had gone out on a jamboree,
And so to take their places our two soap-works heroes came.
The brass work in "Tannhauser" you may know is complicated—

For Wagner was a genius unfettered, and untied,
And these two chaps from Warrington had never seen
" owt like it "—
Well, it simply set them gaping and it left them goggle eyed.

But sternly they remembered they were there to blow on trom-bones.
They pulled themselves together and they came in where they could ;
But mostly where they couldn't—they were Lancashire and dauntless,

And they did things to the score that trombone players never should.
They got effects that Wagner never thought of at his wildest.
It was absolutely devilish to put it at its mildest.

Jacquinot was conducting and it made him very red and hot.
(Jacquinot is pronounced as if it rhymes with Maraschino—
So don't pronounce it as it's spelt—it *isn't* Jacky Nott).

Jacquinot (*sotto voce*) paid them compliments—inspired ones—
In Spanish, French, and German, and in fluent Modern Greek,
Italian, and Slovakian, and Birmingham and Hackney,
A linguist like Jacquinot was is very far to seek.
But at last there came a pause, the trombones got a spell for breathing,
A soft " piano " passage for the wood-wind and the strings,
With little birds a-warbling in the amber lighted tree-tops,*
(This is done by a scene shifter with a blow-pipe in the wings).
Those gallant tromboneers perspired and emptied from the trom-bones
Collected condensations—and they grimly eyed the score,
Then one of them remarked aloud, and everybody heard it,
" Ah never see such music not in all mi life afore.
Tek a look at t' next bit an' let's be knowin' t' worst on it,
Although Ah doan't see how it can be worser nor the first on it.
Ah call this soart o' stuff a lot o' musical embroiderin',

* This is an effect that Wagner never thought of.

It's got so many sharps an' flats eigh, deary me, it's moiderin'."

The other turned the music then, and what they saw was awful.

A true Wagnerian climax in a horrifying key.

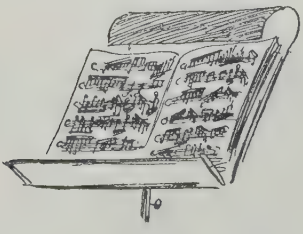
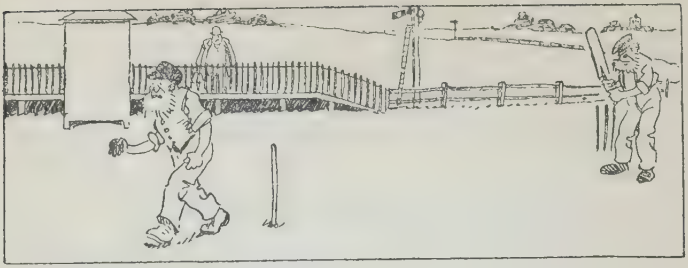
Six flats, no less, were facing them—six flats, yes, heaven help them—

They uttered simultaneously " well, that's done me."

" 'Ere's a bloomin' nest on 'em, wot shall us do Ah wonder ? "

Said one of them " whatever comes we've got to do us best,

So tek 'old o' thi trombone an' brast fer all tha's worth lad—

Thee—blow—three—flats—an—Ah'll—blow—t'rest."



7. THE CRICKET MATCH

THERE'S a little one-horse Station on the Garstang-Leyland Line,
The staff of which is limited it's true.
There's an ancient Station Master who is close on eighty-nine,
And a Porter who is ninety-one, or two.
The traffic is infrequent—so in Winter they play "Nap"—
(For stakes they use fog signals quite a lot),
In the booking office of that little Station off the map—
And they play at Cricket when the weather's hot.

* * *

One day last summer when the sun was scorching up the mat,
These two ignoring rural railway jobs,
At single wicket played—the Station Master at the bat,
With the Porter bowling underhanded lobs.

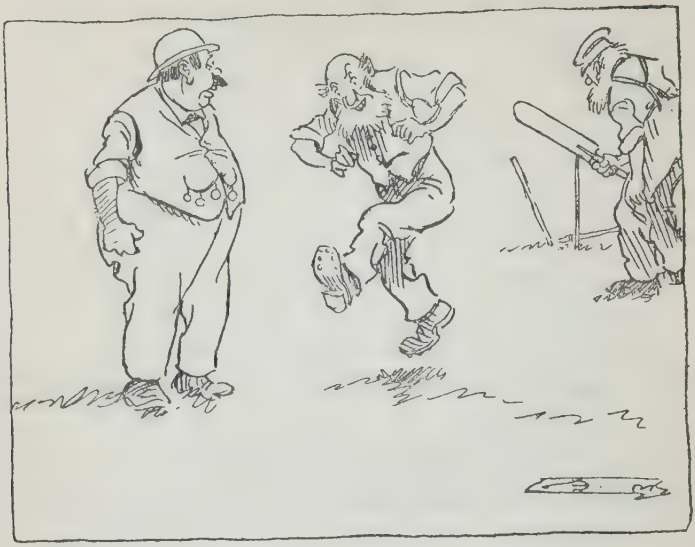
The Station Master smote 'em, oh, he smote 'em far and wide,
He kept on adding sixes to his score ;
The Porter had to field 'em till he very nearly died,
And when he had the breath for it—he swore.

* * *

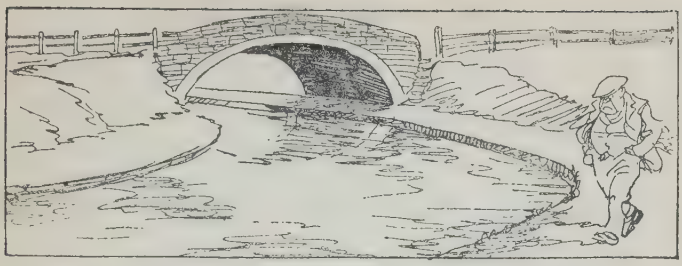
A Leeds Commercial Traveller turned up—waiting for a train.
He saw this pair of antiquated sports.
He watched the Porter's bowling, and it gave him quite a pain,
For the Traveller was a cricketer—of sorts.
He asked if he might join 'em, and the Porter said he might,
He'd welcome a new bowler, so he would,
And he begged him to " get on wi' it an' see an' do it right,
An' tek yon feller's wicket if he could."

* * *

The Traveller took the ball and sent a fast one with a swing,
That took the Station Master's middle peg.
It beat the Station Master—eye and bat, and everything,
A lovely length that turned a yard from leg.



The Porter threw his cap up—slapped the Traveller
on his back—
He said, " Tha didna come a bit too soon.
'Ere it's thirty-first o' August 'cordin' to the almanac—
An' 'e's bin in since the seventeenth o' June."



8 THE JOB

As Joby Oldroyd—on the dole—
  Beside the Leeds Canal was pacing—
He heard a howl near " Potter's Hole "
  Which set his pulses madly racing.
" Twas half a yell and half a yelp.
  He listened, and his brow was frownin',
He then made out these words " 'Ere, 'elp,
  Come on, tha silly fool, Ah's drownin'."

* * *

He gazed into the miry stream,
  And there he saw a fellow creature
Who was the author of the scream—
  With anguish marked on every feature.
He said " 'Ello, wot's wrong wi' thee ? "
  The chap said " Can't tha see Ah's sinkin' ? "
Said Joby " Ay, tha's reet, but see
  Tha'll come oop twice agen Ah'm thinkin'."

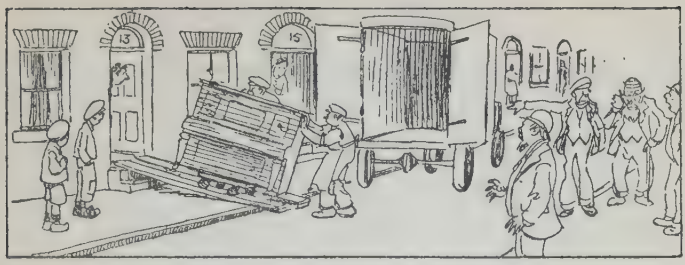
" Wot is thi name, an' where's thi job,
Come on, an' doan't waste time i' cacklin' ? "
The chap said " Abram Coppernob.
At Sumner's Mill Ah work at tacklin'."

Said Joby " Well, tha sees, owd mon,
Ah can't stop now, Ah's bahnd to lave thee,
Ah've got a bit o' business on,
Ah'll do it, an' come back an' save thee."

He bolted off to Sumner's Mill—
  Arrived there panting and perspiring,
(For Sumner's Mill is up a hill,
  And reaching it is somewhat tiring).

The foreman heard him state the case :
  " Abe Coppernob is drowned an' done for.
Eigh, deary me, Ah've 'ad a race—
  To get 'is job is wot Ah've run for."

The foreman grinned a friendly grin.
He said " Owd lad, tha sudna worry,
Just look at wot a mess tha's in,
To get this job. There was no 'urry,
Tha's got thisen i' such a state—
Tha's run like 'ell an' getten hottit ;
But sithee, lad, tha's miles too late—
The chap as pushed 'im in 'as got it."



9. THE PIANO

Josh Tackleton of Burnley that supremely simple man,
A posh " piano " purchased on the weekly payment plan.

* * *

This act of his evoked exasperation in the town—
'Twas felt in " tackler " circles that he'd rather let them down.

* * *

A pal with jealousy consumed, vindictive as could be,
Said " Thee an' thy pianner—why wot use is it to thee ? "

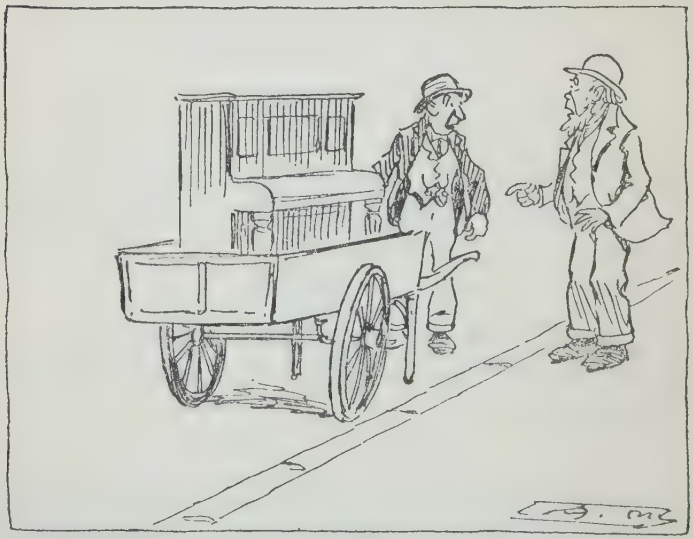
* * *

" Tha wants to act ' well off ' tha does, bah goom tha's gettin' gay,
An' nah thah's getten it in t'ouse tha knoas tha conna play."

" Tha's made thisen a laughin' stock—tha's getten in a mess,
Tha'll be sellin' that pianner lad i'side a month or less."

* * * *

Said Tackleton with dignity—and pride was in his port—



" Thee go an' soak thi yed, see, Ah'll be doin' nowt o' t' sort."

* * *

" Oh, yes tha will," the pal replied, " tha'll sell it lad, tha'll see."

" Well any rate," said Tackleton, " it's nowt to do wi' thee."

Within a month they met again, 'twas in a busy part,
And Tackleton was pushing the piano on a cart.

* * *

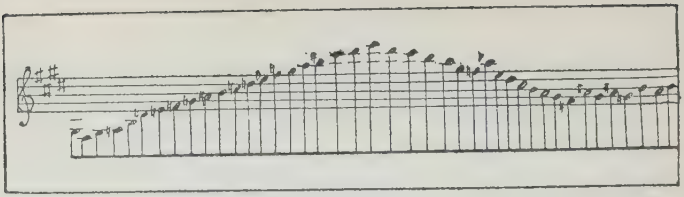
" Ha ha——a " the pal remarked, " tha sees Ah knoad
tha'd 'ave to sell,
I'side a month Ah think Ah said, an' eigh, Ah timed
it well."

* * *

Said Tackleton " Thee owd thi gob, tha's far too much
to say,
Thee mind thi own affairs mi lad, an' let me on mi way."

* * *

" Tha knoas dam' all an' sez too much, that's wot is
wrong wi' thee,
*'Cos Ah'm goin' for mi music lesson, nah then, doesta
see?* "



10. THE PICCOLO

A DARWEN chap I used to know
Who played upon the piccolo.
One solo he could play all right
When sober and when he was tight.

* * *

One day—and to his great surprise
They sent for him to deputise.
It was a very urgent call
From Halle's Band at Free Trade Hall.

* * *

Rehearsal was for twelve o'clock.
He turned up and he got a shock.
There came a solo to be blown—
The like of which he'd never known.

It had so many sharps and flats,
And runs and trills and these and thats —
It made him wambly in the legs,
And made his eyes stick out like pegs.

* * *

But being Lancashire you know—
And there to blow the piccolo—
To give in he did not intend ;
He blew it to the bitter end.

* * *

He played it in a tempo new.
He played it wrong, but played it through.
He played it to the final toot—
Then grabbed his hat, and packed his flute.

* * *

The shocked conductor said, " You know
I thought you played the piccolo."
" Ay, so did I, but owd thi fuss—
It's bin a suck fer both on us."

11. THE COAT HANGER

Josh Tackleton recently got a new suit,
With a three and nine bowler to match it.
The suit was called tweed, but it really was jute,
And it looked as if cut with a hatchet.
When he'd worn it two Sundays 'twas all out of shape,
Though it hadn't much shape when it started ;
The coat had a twist, and the waistcoat a gape,
And the crease from the trousers departed.

* * *

While wearing this rig-out he met Nobby Noakes,—
(And Nobby—for Burnley's a dandy),
Who promptly let off a few time honoured jokes
Which Burnley folk always keep handy.
With ridicule ribald he riddled his hat,
His waistcoat and trousers derided,
And as for his coat—well he said about that
" That t'cut on it couldn't be bided."

" Tha looks like a 'aybag, that's wot's wrong wi' thee,"
He said in his impudent manner—
" Why doesn't tha use a coat hanger like me—
The cost on it's nobbut a tanner " ?

" Ah'll get one," said Josh, " Ay, Ah will, an' eigh well
'Twere gradely o' thee to remind me.
When next time tha sees me Ah'll be sich a swell
That the sight o' me happen'll blind thee."

When next Nobby met him he looked like a mute.
Said Nobby " Why, wot's oop wi' thee, lad ?
Did tha get a coat 'anger to 'ang oop thi suit ? "
Said Josh in sad tones " Can't tha see, lad ?
This 'ere bit o' wood it fair cuts like a saw,
From mi showders it's rippin' the fat off—
Eigh, deary me lad, Ah'm fair rasped till Ah'm raw,
An' this little 'ook's shovin' mi 'at off."

12. THE MEASURE

On a crowded Burnley Tramcar filled from factory and mart
Josh Tackleton was added to the number.
He held his hands in front of him about two feet apart
And he seemed like one a-walking in his slumber.
He held himself so rigid and so very tense
That he rapidly attracted much attention ;
One friendly soul inquired of him " Eigh, hasta lost thi sense ? "
Said Josh " Thee go to——" where I will not mention.

* * *

The car conductor came along collecting people's fares,
Until in front of Tackleton he landed—
Who still sat tense and rigid with the stoniest of stares,
And from Tackleton his fare he then demanded.

Said Tackleton " Ah conna move mi 'ands so 'elp thisen."

The conductor promptly did as he was bidden.

He put the ticket and the change in Josh's pocket, then

Said " Art tha goin' mad or ista kiddin' ? "

" Wot's tha 'owdin' out thi 'ands for i' that gormless kind o' way ?

Tha looks as if thi brains are under watter.

Where doesta think tha's goin', an' wot's oop wi' thee to-day ? "

Said Josh " Thee stop thi gob an' owd thi chatter.
Tha's allus askin' questions, eigh, tha wastes a lot o' gas.
This 'ere's a measure, an' Ah've not to stretch it—
An' if tha *must* be told Ah'm goin' fetch a lump o' glass,
An' this 'ere is the size Ah've got to fetch it."

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GIVE us, Lord,
A bit o' sun,
A bit o' wark,
An' a bit o' fun,
Give us aw,
In th' struggle an' splutter,
Eaur daily bread—
An' a bit o' butter.

* * * * *

Give us health
Eaur keep to make,
An' a bit to spare
For poor folk's sake.
Give us sense
(For we're some of us duffers),
An' a heart to feel
For aw that suffers.

* * * * *

Give us, too,
A bit of a song,
An' a tale, an' a book,
To help us along.
An' give us eaur share
O' sorrow's lesson,
That we may prove
Heaw grief's a blessin'.

* * * * *

Give us, Lord,
A chance to be
Eaur gradely best,
Brave, wise, an' free;
Eaur gradely best
For eaursels an' others,
Till aw men larn
To live as brothers.

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(60th Thousand)
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